IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT MADRAS

DATED: 10.12.2007

CORAM

THE HONOURABLE MR.JUSTICE P.D.DINAKARAN
AND
THE HONOURABLE MR.JUSTICE R.REGUPATHI

Habeas Corpus Petition No.1421 of 2007

Selvam .. Petitioner

Vs

1. The State of Tamil Nadu
   rep. by its Secretary to Government
   Prohibition and Excise Department
   Fort St.George, Chennai-600 009.

2. The Commissioner of Police
   Greater Chennai
   Chennai. .. Respondents

Petition filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India for issue of Writ of Habeas Corpus to call for the entire records, related to petitioner's detention under Tamil Nadu Act 14 of 1982 vide detention order, dated 28.7.2007 on the file of the second respondent herein made in proceedings No.354/2007, quash the same as illegal and consequently direct the respondents herein to produce the said petitioner namely Selvam before this Hon'ble High Court and set the petitioner at liberty from detention, now detained in Central Prison, Puzhal, Chennai-66.

For Petitioner : Mr.C.C.Chellappan
For Respondents: Mr.N.R.Elango
Addl. Public Prosecutor

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O R D E R

(Order of the Court was made by P.D.DINAKARAN,J.)

The second respondent herein clamped an order of detention as against the petitioner/detenu viz., Selvam, son of Nagappan, as the said authority arrived at the subjective satisfaction that the said

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detenu is a Goonda and he has to be detained under Section 3(1) of the Tamil Nadu Prevention of Dangerous Activities of Bootleggers, Drug Offenders, Forest Officers, Goondas, Immoral Traffic Offenders, Sand Offenders, Slum Grabbers and Video Pirates Act, 1982 (Tamil Nadu Act 14 of 1982).

2. Challenging the abovesaid detention, the petitioner himself has come forward with the present Habeas Corpus Petition seeking a writ of habeas corpus to call for the records pertaining to the detention order passed against the detenu by the second respondent in Proceedings No.354/2007, dated 28.7.2007, set aside the same and to direct the respondents to produce the body of the detenu, now detained at Central Prison, Chennai before this Court and set him at liberty.

3.1. The order of detention dated 28.7.2007 was passed on the basis of ground case in Crime No.629 of 2007 for alleged commission of offences under Sections 341, 336, 392 and 506(ii) IPC, complaint of which was lodged by one Sudhagar. According to the complainant, on 8.7.2007, while he was proceeding at Indira Nagar near Youth Hostel to attend his work along with his brother Lokesh, the detenu herein and his associates Jose @ Mariyadoss and Lakshmanan came in a cycle and wrongfully restrained the complainant and his brother. Further, the detenu and his associates snatched two cell phones and a wrist watch from the complainant and his brother at the knife point. When the complainant raised hue and cry, the detenu and his associates tried to escape from the spot. On hearing the hue and cry of the complainant, the public at the spot came for his rescue. On seeing the public, the detenu and his associates picked up stones from the road side and pelted the same against them. The stones fell on the road side and scattered all over the road. Further, the detenu and his associates threatened the public by brandishing knife and uttering filthy words. The public ran to safer places out of fear of danger to their lives and properties, and thus the detenu created terror and panic at the spot. However, the complainant with the help of public apprehended the detenu and his associates and handed over them to the Inspector of Police, J6 Thiruvanmiyur Police Station. Based on the complaint given by the complainant, a case, as stated above, was registered.

3.2. The second respondent, taking note of the above case as a ground case and finding that there are twelve adverse cases pending against the detenu in Crime Nos.365, 400, 480, 499, 569, 587, 608, 609, 612, 617, 623 and 625 of 2007 on the file of J6 Thiruvanmiyur Police Station for the offence punishable under Section 379 I.P.C., having satisfied that there is a compelling necessity to detain him in order to prevent him from indulging in the activities which are prejudicial to the maintenance of public order, ordered his detention branding him as a Goonda.

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4. The learned counsel for the petitioner placing reliance on the decision of the Apex Court in DARPAN KUMAR SHARMA alias DHARBAN KUMAR SHARMA v. STATE OF TAMIL NADU [(2003) 1 CRIMES 446], contends that the said twelve adverse cases relate to the offence punishable under Section 379 I.P.C., and therefore, the solitary instance of robbery mentioned in the ground case is not relevant for sustaining the order of detention and hence, the impugned order of detention suffers on the ground of non-application of mind on the part of the detaining authority.

5. We have heard learned Additional Public Prosecutor on the above said point.

6. As rightly pointed out by the learned counsel for the petitioner, it is evident that the adverse cases mentioned in the grounds of detention do not relate to any law and order problem. But, the offence said to have been committed by the detenu as per the ground case attracts the provisions of the Tamil Nadu Act 14 of 1982.

7.1. In DARPAN KUMAR SHARMA alias DHARBAN KUMAR SHARMA v. STATE OF TAMIL NADU [(2003) 1 CRIMES 446], cited supra, whereunder the order of detention was based on the solitary instance of robbery, the Apex Court held as follows:-

> "... Though in the grounds of detention the detaining authority had stated that by committing this offence in public the detenu created a sense of alarm, scare and a feeling of insecurity in the minds of the public of the area and thereby acted in a manner prejudicial to the maintenance of public order which affected the even tempo of life of the community, but citation of these words in the order of detention is more in the nature of a ritual rather than with any significance to the content of the matter. Thus, a solitary instance of robbery as mentioned in the grounds of detention is not relevant for sustaining the order of detention for the purpose of preventing the petitioner from acting in a manner prejudicial to the maintenance of public order."

7.2. That apart, the above ratio laid down by the Apex Court was followed by a Division Bench of this Court, in which one of us (P.D.DINAKARAN, J.) was a party, in MALA v. THE SECRETARY TO GOVERNMENT, PROHIBITION AND EXCISE DEPARTMENT, GOVT. OF TAMIL NADU, CHENNAI, [(2004) M.L.J. (Crl.) 306].

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8. Admittedly, in the instant case, the adverse cases relate to the offence of theft punishable under Section 379, IPC and the ground case relates to the offence of robbery punishable under Section 392 IPC and hence, we are of the opinion that the ratio laid down in DARPAN KUMAR SHARMA's case, cited supra, squarely applies to the present case on hand, which is also not disputed by the learned Additional Public Prosecutor.

9. Applying the ratio laid down by the Apex Court in Darpan Kumar Sharma's case, cited supra, we are inclined to set aside the order of detention, Accordingly, the order of detention dated 28.7.2007 is set aside and the Habeas Corpus Petition is allowed. The detenu Selvam is directed to be released forthwith, unless he is required in any other case.

ATR

Sd/-
Asst. Registrar.

/true copy/

Sub Asst. Registrar.

To

1. The Secretary to Government
   Prohibition & Excise Department
   Secretariat, Chennai 9.

2. The Commissioner of Police
   Greater Chennai
   Chennai.

3. The Superintendent
   Central Prison
   Puzhal, Chennai.

4. The Public Prosecutor
   High Court, Madras.

5. The Joint Secretary to Government,
   Public (Law and Order)
   Fort St. George, Madras-9.

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